Phil 232: Philosophy and Multiculturalism spring '12

Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition" (sections I and II)

I. (section I) Multiculturalism (social and educational) as response to cultural diversity A. Social and individual importance of cultural identities.

B. Multiculturalism and "recognition": the harm of misrecognition through internalization

- C. Recognition as a human need
- II. "Recognition" and "identity"

A. Recognition: a brief history

- 1. Honor and traditional social hierarchies (26-27)
- 2. Collapse of traditional hierarchies and the rise of democracy (26-27)
- 3. Democracy, dignity, and equal recognition (27)
- 4. Universal need for recognition (34-35); was always there but pre-

modern society conferred it so the need was not noticed

- B. Identity: a brief history
 - 1. Authenticity
 - 2. Being in touch with individual uniqueness
 - 3. 30: Herder's contribution (cf. DuBois)
 - a. Individual level
 - b. 31: cultural group level
 - 4. 32: Individual identity as "dialogical", not "monological"
 - a. Fantasy of pure personal independence (33-34)
 - b. My own identity depends on dialogical relations with others
 - 5. 36: Importance of recognition in forming identity
 - a. intimate level
 - b. social level
 - 6. Damage of withheld recognition: 2 forms [Taylor does not distinguish
- these]
- a. Not seen (cf. Alcoff)
- b. Devalued (cf. DuBois & Alcoff)

III. (section II) The politics of equal recognition in the public sphere

(2 directions from "equal dignity")

A. 37: "politics of equality/equal dignity": Universal rights and entitlements based on shared human characteristics (e.g. Kant [41]: equal rationality)

1. Dispute whether to include economic rights along with political ones, in relation to not creating 2nd class citizenship

B. 38: Recognition of distinctness/"politics of difference" [Cf. Parekh]

1. E.g. giving special and distinct rights to aboriginal groups (Taylor calls them "bands") to protect against forces that would undermine cultural survival, integrity, or autonomy

a. Taylor's critique of Kymlicka (p. 40-41, note 16)

2. Distinctness recognition sometimes uses universalist language,

thus confusing the politics of equality with the politics of difference (38-39)

C. 40: Affirmative action as "level playing field" (hence an equality value) vs. cultural distinctness preservation, a difference value

D. 42: Equal potentiality principle, and its application to culture: Bellow's remark about Zulus

E. 43: The complaints of the politics of equality and the politics of difference against each other: discrimination v. homogenization